



# The Journal

Vol. 28

No. 28

[www.dcmilitary.com/journal/](http://www.dcmilitary.com/journal/)

July 14, 2016

## STAYIN' ALIVE:

### Airman Resilient After Motorcycle Accident

By **SHARON RENEE TAYLOR**  
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff  
writer

The 21-year-old Airman had a hard time sleeping that night. Two in the morning Sept. 19, 2015, he hadn't found a buddy to ride with him, so Air Force Senior Airman Kyle Cook set out on his motorcycle—on an unfamiliar Hampton, Va., road in the dark—alone.

Rounding a bend, he saw arrows on the pavement. Cook anticipated an open intersection ahead and changed lanes. Trees blocked his view. There was no time to react.

His Buell 1125R struck the curb in front of him at full-speed. The crash launched Cook off his bike, flying more than two feet off the ground, and smashed the experienced rider into a tree.

The tree broke his fall, fractured his left leg in three places—and severed the right.

"It took all the skin off my leg, and then the leg with it," he said.

His helmet struck the pavement below.

"I just [laid] there, kinda confused," Cook explained. "I thought I had just [fallen] off my bike; I didn't even know I had hit the tree."

He laid there for a second. He tried to get up. He couldn't move.

"I thought I was paralyzed. I looked at my right leg and lifted it up. It felt real light, like a fluid-filled sack. Nothing," he said. "That time I knew it was gone."

With his hands, Cook dragged himself more than 30 feet to the middle of the road where he hoped a passerby would see him and help. He lifted his left leg and what was remaining of the right as high as he could, to ward off shock.

How did he know what to do?



PHOTO BY JAMIE PETROSKY

**In 2015, Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Cook drove a Buell 1125R which struck the curb in front of him at full-speed. The crash launched Cook off his bike, flying more than two feet off the ground, and smashed the experienced rider into a tree that amputated his leg. He plans to repair his bike and return to riding.**

"Kinda like instinct, I guess," Cook said. He described his "knowing" as the combination of adrenaline and the fight to stay alive.

With his legs in the air, he kept himself alive.

A driver saw Cook and stopped. Cook repeatedly coaxed the man, stunned by the accident scene, to call for help.

Minutes later, a police officer arrived

and placed a tourniquet on Cook to control bleeding. Rescuers found more than two liters of blood at the scene.

The paramedics arrived and secured ice from a local restaurant to preserve his amputated leg, and rushed him to the hospital.

The emergency medical technicians tried to keep him conscious. They loaded the young man in an ambulance.

"That's the last thing I remembered," Cook said.

Transcripts of the 911-call were titled, "Three a.m. fatal accident," he explained. "I don't know if I died or what."

Transported to Riverside Medical Center in Newport News, Va., surgeons

See **ALIVE**

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# Navy Releases Mid-Year SRB Update

**From CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Navy released an update to the Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) award plan July 5 in NAVADMIN 155/16 that includes 25 award level decreases and four skills removed from the list released earlier this year in NAVADMIN 036/16.

Eighty-four skills remain unchanged in this update and no skills were added or had award levels increased. NAVADMIN 155/16 also lists 39 skills closed since February when they met their reenlistment quotas. The NAVADMIN contains the complete list of SRB skills award levels with changes.

Skill removals and award level decreases take effect 30 days after release of the NAVADMIN.

Navy continues to see strong retention in all zones, providing an opportunity to adjust skills mid-fiscal year.

Sailors should expect to see more frequent SRB updates via NAVADMIN as well as through the SRB page on Navy Personnel Command's website.

This update brings back the policy that Sailors with Tier 2 and Tier 3 skills must reenlist in the same fiscal year as their expiration of active obligated service (EAOS), a change from the last NAVADMIN.

SRB rewards Sailors who attain special training in skills most needed in the fleet and helps meet critical skill reenlistment benchmarks. Award levels are adjusted as reenlistment requirements for specific ratings and skill sets are met.

Enlisted Community Managers continuously monitor the health of their community and make recommendations to leadership, as



PHOTO BY MC2 NATHAN R. MCDONALD

**Sailors and Marines man the rails as the dock landing ship USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41) departs for deployment. Whidbey Island is deployed with the Wasp Amphibious Ready Group to support maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation.**

required, to maintain acceptable manning levels in critical skills. As reenlistment requirements for specific ratings and skill sets are met, award levels are reduced to zero and posted on the Navy Personnel Command (NPC) SRB webpage <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/career/enlistedcareeradmin/Pages/SRB.aspx/>.

Eligible Sailors desiring SRB reenlistment are encouraged to work with their command career

counselors, command master chiefs and chain of command to discuss timing of reenlistment and procedures well before their EAOS. Requests are required to be submitted a minimum of 35 days prior to the requested reenlistment date.

Current SRB information can be found at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/career/enlistedcareeradmin/Pages/SRB.aspx/>.

## Bethesda Notebook

**Inaugural Heimall's Cup**

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center holds its inaugural Heimall's Cup competition July 22 beginning at 9 a.m. Volunteers are needed for set up and other duties, and the volunteer registration deadline is July 8. Registration deadline for participants is July 15. Events will include three-on-three basketball, seven vs. seven flag football, six vs. six soccer, four-man relay, wheel barrel race, sack race, three-legged race, dead hang (pull-up bar), sit-up and push-up challenges, tug of war and dunk tank. Burgers, hot dogs and beverages will be provided to all who attend. For more information, contact HMC Jameson at [Calisha.m.jameson.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Calisha.m.jameson.mil@mail.mil), or HM2 Redor at [Rodney.t.redor.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Rodney.t.redor.mil@mail.mil). Interested volunteers can contact Sgt. Keum at [Andrew.j.keum.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Andrew.j.keum.mil@mail.mil). Event and team questions should be directed to CS1 Willis at [daniel.l.willis.mil@mail.mil](mailto:daniel.l.willis.mil@mail.mil).

**Pre-retirement Seminar**

A pre-retirement seminar is scheduled for July 26-27 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The seminar is open to WRNMMC GS employees planning to retire within the next five years. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required. For more information, call Lisa Wilson at 301-319-8510.

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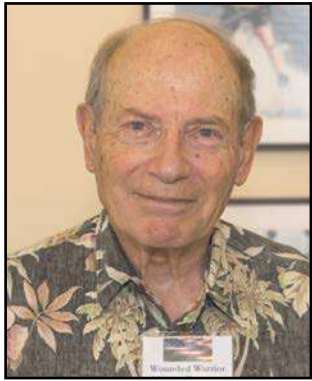
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# From the Deckplates: Who Would You Like To Meet In History?



**Jack Gordon - Wounded Warrior Mentor Program mentor**

I would like to meet Aristotle because the idea that he developed -as I see it- is the idea of reason and truth as opposed to passion and essentially tribal alliances, whereby every nation and everything has something that means **We** -which is all my folks- and **They**, who are not my folks. Aristotle and Socrates saw further than that. Saw that we're all in this together. I think maybe also Leonardo Da Vinci. He didn't just paint and sculpt, he was also an engineer and a number of other things.



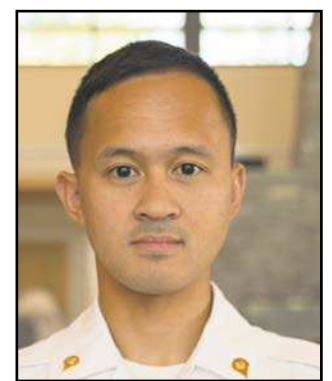
**HM3 Shannel Harris**

One person I would like to meet is Michael Jackson because he had crazy work ethic. A lot of people today would benefit from the type of work ethic he had. I want to know how he stayed so motivated to wake up every day to do what he do. I want to know how he affected everybody with what he did. Many lives have been affected by everything that he's done and I just want to know how he did that.



**Shawntel Marie Powell - Bldg. 62 Housing Desk Clerk**

I would like to meet President Barack Obama because he is the first black president of the United States and I personally believe he experienced more in his two terms than any other president as far as all of the terror attacks that have made history during his 8 year term. The second person I'd like to meet is Harvey Milk. He was a gay activist in the California gay community and it's nice to see that it's acknowledged now for the month of June.



**Specialist Joseph Magtibay**

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Photos BY AIRMAN MATTHEW HOBSON

## NSAB Receives SECNAV Platinum Energy Award, Opens New Energy Resource

By **ANDREW DAMSTEDT**  
NSAB Public Affairs staff writer

Naval District Washington Commandant Rear Adm. Yancy B. Lindsey presented Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Commanding Officer Capt. Marvin L. Jones with an award for the installation's energy initiatives and helped open a new ground source heat pump during a ribbon cutting at the Child Development Centers (CDCs) aboard NSAB, July 6.

The 2015 Secretary of the Navy Platinum Energy Award was awarded to NSAB for its improvements in energy conservation, including a 42.8 percent energy reduction from 2003 to 2014 and a 35.6 percent water reduction from 2007 to 2014. NSAB also saved \$10 million in fiscal year 2014 through its energy projects and an energy behavioral campaign.

When he was given the task of improving the base's energy program three years ago,

NSAB Installation Energy Manager William Ortega-Ortiz said "it took me all of two minutes to realize that we were extremely deficient as an installation" in energy conservation.

So for the past three years, NSAB has made several improvements including the installation of new LED light fixtures in several buildings and outside lighting areas, implementing energy conservation projects into future construction and renovations such as the new ground source heat pump.

The installation has 44 energy projects scheduled between 2013-2018 that will result in an estimated



PHOTO BY AIRMAN MATTHEW HOBSON

**Naval District Washington Commandant Yancy Lindsey along with Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Commanding Officer Capt. Marvin L. Jones and NSAB employees cut a ribbon July 6 to note the completion of the ground source heat pump project.**

\$16 million in savings.

"The savings are completely off the chart right now," Ortega-Ortiz said.

In addition to being good for the environment, energy conservation helps with the war-fighting effort by saving dollars, Lindsey told the assembled audience.

"Those are resources that can be pumped back

into ships and airplanes that we need in the Navy," Lindsey said.

Changing the culture is a big part of energy savings, Lindsey said.

"When you don't sign those (power and water bills), you don't tend to be as conscious of it as you are at home or elsewhere," Lindsey said. "Getting people to think a different way, not having a string of lights in your office or not everybody having a little refrigerator under their desk to keep their soda cold. It's little things like that that make a difference."

Jones commended those involved with reducing NSAB's energy consumption.

"I'm encouraging you all to continue the stewardship we've done thus far and to be very efficient and creative in our energy conservation efforts," Jones said.

The \$8.2 million ground source heat pump project replaced the current heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) system at the CDCs with one that is high-efficiency, includes renewable energy and will result in an estimated \$516,000 in annual savings, according to Ortega-Ortiz.

Recycling posters – some made from leftover puzzle pieces and one with plastic bottles shaped into a caterpillar – made by preschool children were hung up on the columns in front of the CDCs for the ribbon cutting.

"We wanted to show that we do recycle," said NSAB Child & Youth Program Oversight Director Jamila Aziz.



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# Mom Shows Faith, Love and Empathy After Son's Accident

By SHARON RENEE TAYLOR

WRNMMC Public Affairs staff writer

Diana "Sis" Cook had a "knowing" of her 22-year-old son's tragic September 19, 2015 motorcycle accident.

"Not at the time, but leading up to [it], months prior, I was very uneasy. I can't explain it," she recalled. The mother of two said she hadn't slept well in months. "I was highly concerned about him...I told his major that, too."

Her youngest child, Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Cook, left three weeks after his high school graduation for basic training.

"I found out his junior year in high school he had joined the Air Force," Diana explained. She said she was devastated that he would leave home so soon after graduation.

No one in their family served in the military until Kyle. The family lived in rural, northwest Franklin, Pa., an hour north of Pittsburgh. The country boy had grown up riding dirt bikes and four-wheelers.

"He has been riding his entire life," Diana said. News of his accident surprised her.

Four months after basic training, Kyle left for Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, and then Langley Air Force Base in Norfolk, Va., where he worked the night shift in munition systems. He couldn't find anyone to ride with him at 2 a.m. that September morning, so he set out alone, on a road he'd never travelled, she said.

Once she and her husband learned of Kyle's accident, the two hit the road for the nine-hour drive to Hampton, Va. where he was hospitalized.

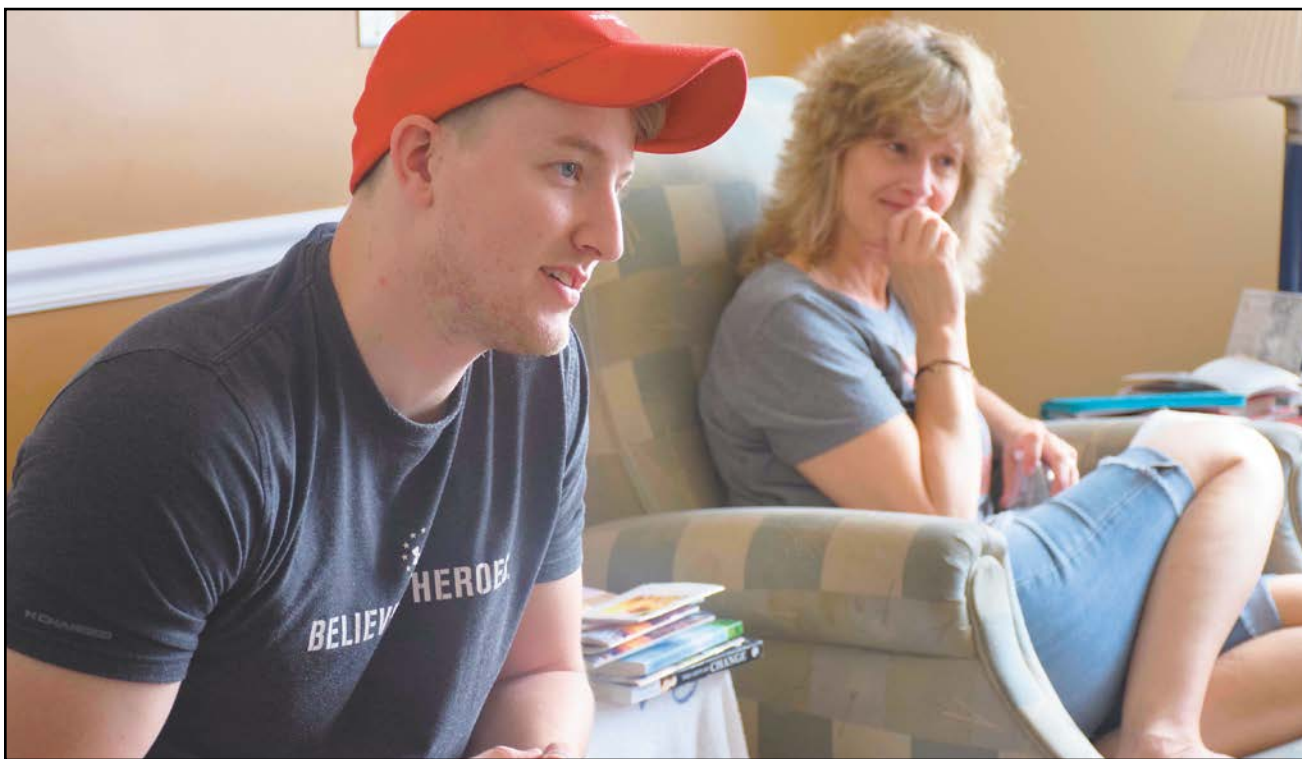


PHOTO BY JAMIE PETROSKY

**For nine months Diana Cook has held strength for her son, Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Cook, who is recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center from his 2015 motorcycle accident.**

Four hours into the drive, she got a call from a hospital chaplain.

It was 7:30 a.m. Until that point, she was calm. She made her husband pull over.

"I was starting to feel anxious," Diana explained. She prayed the 'Our Father' prayer into the phone. She called the nurses station on Kyle's ward. Crying,

she asked the nurse to put the phone up to his ear, "and she did. I prayed 'Our Father' again."

Diana asked her son if he remembered her voice—she can't recall his response, she said, sobbing. The mother prayed non-stop until she arrived at the

See **EMPATHY**

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EMPATHY

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Newport News, Va., hospital where Kyle was first taken after his accident.

Standing bedside after her son was removed from the ventilator, “He asked me if this was God’s plan,” Diana wept. She’s not a religious person, she said, but always prayed, and had an enormous amount of faith, which added positivity to an “already love-filled life.”

Diana remained at her son’s side after he was transferred to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda several days later. As the Airman endured surgeries, recovered from his injuries and learned to walk with a prosthetic leg, she became her son’s nonmedical attendant.

The two moved into an apartment in Tranquility Hall (Bldg. 62) at Naval Support Activity Bethesda. Diana helped him in and out of his wheelchair, accompanied him to medical appointments, did his laundry and cooked meals. She said an enormous amount of faith helped her experience the situation with her son. She is thankful.

“I have a hard time asking God for things. I will for someone else but not myself. I only thank Him because He knows what we need,” she said. “I go through my day, praying...I won’t leave his side.”

She is her son’s support.

“I have this connection with him,” Diana said, “I feel his pain...it’s emotionally draining on me, but that’s okay. [Every patient here] is a miracle.”

For nine months she’s held strength for her son.

“It’s odd,” she said. “Sometimes I’m his strength and sometimes he’s mine.”

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**ALIVE**  
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placed rods in his remaining leg, cleaned him up, and briefly placed him on a ventilator. He woke up with his parents in the room. They drove the nine-hour trip from Franklin, Pa. to be by his side. Cook was transferred to the trauma ward at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) for the first of an estimated 20 surgeries to date. He

expects more—a bone grafting for his left leg. He remains on the WRNMMC-medical campus, recovering in Tranquility Hall, Bldg. 62, with his mom, Diana. She helps him with day-to-day tasks. “When I first got here [Bldg.62], I could hardly even move. I had an electronic wheelchair with a joystick and it was hard for me to just transfer to [it]; I couldn’t move around at all,” Cook said. Diana brought food to him in bed, and set out his clothes.

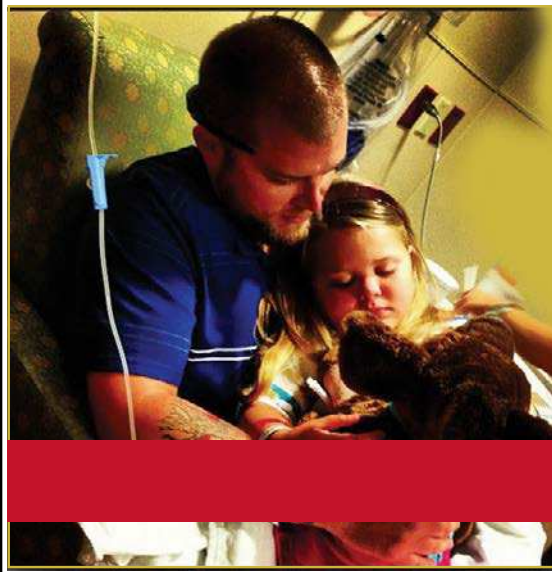
“There’s no way I would’ve been able to do it without her,” he added. “Mentally, it’s kind of a huge thing, not just physical. I have someone here. I’m not alone.” Nine months later, Cook plans to complete this portion of his recovery at WRNMMC. He continues to progress with his prosthetic leg: first using crutches, and today without. “It just feels good to stand,” he said, now a 23-year-old Air Force staff sergeant. Will he ever ride again?

“Hell, yeah. I want to get back on a bike,” he said. Maybe [I’ll] switch from a sport bike to a cruiser-style instead. “They make a special [prosthetic] leg for it.” His advice to other service members who enjoy riding motorcycles: know where you’re riding; don’t travel on any roads you don’t know; and always be weary of obstacles ahead. “Most accidents occur because of failure to interpret the turn,” Cook said. Cook explained the accident has increased his faith, he prays more; he has more gratitude. “I’m really thankful that I had all the schools and churches praying for me,” he said. He believes those prayers played a big factor in his recovery. Cook said he knows people are still praying for him. He’s grateful for those prayers. Cook hopes to meet the passerby that helped him that fateful morning. “So I can thank him,” he said.



PHOTO BY JAMIE PETROSKY

After losing his right leg in a 2015 motorcycle accident, Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Cook has expressed his desire to get back on a motorcycle, where he would use a special prosthetic leg for a cruiser-style motorcycle.



Wounded Warriors Family Support is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the families of our combat wounded. Having earned Charity Navigator's highest four-star rating, WWFS aids veterans and their families in healing the wounds that medicine cannot. Visit [wwfs.org](http://wwfs.org) for more information about our veteran programs.



CFC# 81534

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